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ABSTRACT

A prestige scale for 50 agricultural and agriculturally related occupations was developed. The scale was constructed utilizing data from a mailed-questionnaire survey conducted during the spring semester of 1977 at 14 universities in the Southern United States. A 15% random sample of undergraduate majors in agriculture at these schools were contacted; this resulted in an initial target sample of 3,398 students. Seventy-four percent, or 2,392 students, participated in the study. Questionnaire items and scaling techniques closely parallel those used in the National Opinion Research Center study (North-Hatt Scale). The scale indicated that: veterinarian, with a prestige score of 92.7 was rated as the most prestigious occupation while migrant laborer, with a score of 34.0, was the occupation with the lowest evaluation; there was a decided tendency for the sample to evaluate professional, managerial, and scientific occupations toward the top of the prestige hierarchy; swine raisers were given substantially lower scores than cattle raisers; poultry raisers were ranked slightly lower than swine raisers; farm production occupations were ranked high only if they involved either ownership or management by inference. A copy of the prestige scale for agricultural occupations, the scale value for each occupation, and an index of agreement for each occupation are reported along with an analysis of several factors which may explain differences in the perception of prestige. (Author/NQ)

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A PRESTIGE SCALE FOR AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS*

by

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ABSTRACT

The development of a prestige scale for 50 agricultural and agriculturally related occupations is reported. The scale was constructed utilizing data from a mailed-questionnaire survey conducted during the spring semester of 1977 at 14 universities in the southern region of the United States. A 15 percent random sample of undergraduate majors in agriculture at these schools were contacted, and 2,392 students (74 percent) participated in the study. Questionnaire items and scaling techniques closely parallel those used in the National Opinion Research Center study (North-Hatt Scale). A copy of the prestige scale for agricultural occupations, the scale value for each occupation, and an index of agreement for each occupation are reported along with an analysis of several factors which may explain differences in the perception of prestige.

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It has become widely recognized that American agriculture is becoming increasingly important for both our society and for the international food supply. As such, American agriculture appears as one of the major forces shaping life for the remainder of this century. Colleges of agriculture and land-grant institutions, as critical centers for the development of agricultural technology and expertise, will play a substantial role in determining the future. Since the mid-1960's, the enrollment of these institutions has been expanding at a rapid rate; this growth has been accompanied by some fundamental changes in the composition and function of the colleges. The agriculture student body is no longer composed primarily of farm boys, but has expanded to include substantial numbers of urban students and, more recently, women. At the curriculum level, the colleges now offer a variety of nontraditional majors and courses that extend the realm of agricultural training far beyond production and marketing.

Colleges of agriculture, of course, constitute the major institutions that produce professionals in agriculture. It is at this point that the question of the relative grading of agricultural occupations in terms of prestige can be introduced. Modern agricultural occupations span a wide

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range of specialties--occupations that can be differentiated potentially along a number of dimensions including the one at hand, the prestige hierarchy. As our society has moved from ascription to achievement, a person's occupation has grown to considerable importance (Gross, 1959), and studies which deal with occupational prestige have proliferated. However, little attention has been paid to the agricultural occupations. It is the object of this manuscript, then, to report in a descriptive vein the initial development of a prestige scale for a set of 50 agricultural and agriculturally-related occupations. The goal of this research is to construct a scale for those fifty occupations that is comparable to the North-Hatt prestige scale for general occupations developed in the 1947 National Opinion Research Center study (Reiss, 1961).

North-Hatt scaling procedures were applied to data obtained from a sample of southern undergraduate college students who were majoring in agricultural subjects. In addition, social origin indicators such as farm background, socioeconomic status, and sex, were investigated as possible sources of variation in the perception of prestige.

Development of Prestige Scales

Few social science endeavors have received such sustained research attention as has the measurement of occupational prestige. This approach to social stratification emphasizes the importance of the vertical strata in society and assumes that the prestige of occupations in modern industrial societies provides a meaningful and reliable method of differentiating along that dimension. In the United States, the empirical scaling of occupational prestige can be traced to a number of early studies, including those by Counts (1925), Anderson (1927-28), Wilkinson (1929), and Smith (1943). In 1947, Cecil C. North and Paul K. Hatt, in collaboration with the National Opinion Research Center, conducted a national survey that sought to evaluate the social standing of a large group of occupations (Reiss, 1961). This extremely influential study forms the centerpiece in the literature on prestige scales and is the major point of reference for practically all prestige scales that have followed.

The North-Hatt method was based upon the subjective perceptions of respondents regarding their evaluations of a number of occupations. Respondents were asked how they would judge each occupation and were presented a rating card that ranged in the order of Excellent standing, Good standing, Average standing, Somewhat below average standing, Poor standing, and I don't know (Reiss, 1961: 19). Ninety occupations were used in the development of the scale. As has been pointed out, this set of occupations is not generally regarded to be representative of the American occupational structure, despite the efforts of North and Hatt to make it just that. The list seems to suffer from three main problems: (1) it contains a high proportion of professional occupations; (2) many of the occupations are scientific or governmental in nature; and (3) it contains no "women's occupations".

There is substantial evidence resulting from the numerous empirical applications of prestige scales that the prestige of occupations is nearly constant. In their assessment of occupational prestige in the U.S. between 1925 and 1963, Hodge, Siegel and Rossi (1964) conclude that there is a high degree of stability in the perception of occupational prestige during that period. This conclusion was based upon a 1963 national replication

of the NORC study and an examination of the earlier studies by Counts (1925) and Smith (1943). They found a correlation coefficient of .99 between the scores obtained in the 1947 NORC study and the scores obtained in their 1963 replication. There appeared to be a very slight upward shift in scores during the period, but the most remarkable characteristic was the extreme consistency of scores. They also found substantial correlations (although of slightly smaller magnitude) between the Counts study (1927), the Smith study (1943), and the two more recent national surveys. This led them to the observation, "there have been no substantial changes in occupational prestige in the United States since 1925"(p. 296).

There is also considerable data that indicate the cross-societal stability of occupational prestige scores. By 1971, Marsh reported that occupational prestige data is available for 25 societies (Marsh, 1972; also Inkeles and Rossi, 1956 and Hodge, et al., 1966). It appears from these studies that the overall occupational prestige hierarchy is very similar not only among Western European countries and the United States, but also among developing countries, such as Taiwan and the Phillipines. Although there is less comparable data readily available, it appears that the Communist and Socialist societies, such as Russia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, also show a similar occupational prestige hierarchy. Perhaps the major exception taken to the above generality can be found in Penn's (1975) comparison of the prestige hierarchy of the United States with those of Czechoslovakia and Poland. He found that the values of Socialist countries leads to a higher ranking than in the U.S. of such occupations as farmers and miners and lower rankings for governmental and political occupations.

Correlates

The significance of analyzing occupational prestige becomes evident when its correlates are understood. For example, Caplow (1954) maintains that the prestige of an occupation is associated with "behavior control"; that is, the influence that an individual who holds that occupation has over others. With this social power thesis in mind, we would anticipate that those who hold higher prestige jobs would have proportionately more subordinates (Marsh, 1971). Thielbar and Feldman (1969) feel that higher prestige occupations are not only associated with power but also are viewed as being more satisfying. They also found that more prestige was given those jobs which concerned problem solving rather than the mere application of routine solutions. In a similar vein, Reiss (1961) has noted that in evaluating occupations, those dealing with symbolic tasks are rated higher than physical ones, occupations requiring formal education are rated above those with just training requirements, clean work is favored over dirty work, and office occupations score higher than factory ones.

Garbin and Bates (1961, 1966) have empirically assessed the relationship between occupational prestige and occupational traits and have found correlations in excess of .80 for 11 of the 20 traits considered. That is, the perception of higher prestige occupations was found to be associated with the following traits:

-Regarded as desirable to associate with
-Intelligence required
-Scarcity of personnel who can do the job
-Interesting and challenging work

-Training required
-Education required
-Work calls for originality and initiative
-Responsibility to supervise others
-Having an influence over others
-Security
-Opportunity for advancement

Simpson and Simpson (1950) found that the NORC scale was highly correlated with a training-education-skill and responsibility scale constructed for the same occupations. They suggested that these two characteristics "could be used to form an index of occupational prestige" (p. 139).

Critiques

It should be noted that there is a substantial body of literature that on one hand attempts to relate occupational prestige to theories of social stratification and on the other to critique the measurement of occupational prestige in terms of its meaning, interpretation, and procedures. The questions are of two general types: (1) "Exactly what is the individual ranking when he rates occupations?"; and (2) "Exactly what do these ratings mean in terms of understanding society?" Frankly, it is beyond the scope of this paper to adequately address even a minority of these positions. However, it does appear obligatory to recognize these divergent and questioning views (Gross, 1959; Gusfield and Schwartz, 1963; Thielbar and Feldman, 1969; Alexander, 1972; Goldthorpe and Hope, 1972; and Stehr, 1974).

The Sample

The original goal of the research was to sample undergraduate agriculture majors in the southern region of the United States. The population was particularly restricted to agricultural majors at the largest College of Agriculture in each of 13 southern states. Although it did not have the largest program in that state, Texas Tech University was also included because it was judged to have both a large student enrollment in agriculture and to play a substantial role in southern agricultural education. The universities thus selected were:

Auburn University	Mississippi State University
University of Arkansas	North Carolina State University
Clemson University	Oklahoma State University
University of Florida	University of Tennessee
University of Georgia	Texas A&M University
University of Kentucky	Texas Tech University
Louisiana State University	Virginia Polytechnical Institute

Interestingly, two of the very earliest occupational prestige studies also utilized agricultural students as raters. For example, George S. Counts (1925) interviewed a group of freshmen as part of his sample who were in the College of Agriculture at the University of Minnesota (Minnesota high school students and teachers were also sampled). The students were asked to rank 45 occupations according to their social standing. W. A. Anderson (1927) conducted a similar study at North Carolina State College (now University) that included a sample of students from the College of Agriculture. A casual examination of both Counts' and Anderson's data

suggest that agricultural students did not markedly perceive occupational prestige differently than the other raters.

Student enrollment estimates for fall semester, 1976, were obtained from the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (Hensley, 1976). From these estimates it appeared that a 15 percent sample would yield a manageable target sample of 3 to 4 thousand students and allow for sufficiently accurate estimates.

The Dean of Agriculture at each of the 14 schools was requested to provide a listing, including names and addresses, of undergraduate students who had declared agricultural majors. It should be noted that this approach resulted in some modest inconsistencies in the sampling frame. For example, at the University of Florida, students do not declare majors until their third year--hence the Florida list included only juniors and seniors. Upon receiving the lists from the participating schools, a screening and trimming was carried out primarily to delete graduate and special students should they appear. The lists collectively consisted of 22,766 undergraduate agriculture majors. Utilizing the APL random number generator, a 15 percent random sample was selected from each school. This resulted in an initial target sample of 3,398 students (see Table 1).

Data Collection

In the spring of 1977, sample members were mailed questionnaires with a cover letter explaining the survey. If a sample member had no known mailing address, his or her questionnaire was mailed in care of the Dean of the College of Agriculture with the request that the Dean locate the student and distribute the questionnaire. The time frame for the survey and delinquent returns was March 25, 1977 through May 5, 1977.

The institutional sample sizes and return rates are shown in Table 1. The adjusted sample sizes have excluded graduate and special students. The "raw rate" of return is the number of questionnaires returned divided by the number mailed out. The "adjusted rate" of return is determined by using the sample size adjusted for deleted sample members whose questionnaires were returned as "undeliverable". Adjusted rates varied from 83 percent to 61 percent with an overall rate of 74 percent for the region. The final sample size was 2,392 students (see Table 1 for rates).

Measurement of Prestige

The procedures used to measure prestige of occupations closely approximate those developed in the 1947 National Opinion Research Center or North-Hatt study (Reiss, 1961). Sixty occupations were selected for evaluation. Each student was asked to rate the general standing of each occupation with his or her choices ranging in order from "Excellent standing" to "Poor standing" or "I don't know".

Prestige scores for each occupation were developed by first assigning weights to responses where "Excellent standing" = 100, "Good standing" = 80, "Average standing" = 60, "Somewhat below average standing" = 40, and "Poor standing" = 20. The prestige score for each occupation is the simple average of the assigned weights. The scores range from a possible maximum of 100 to a minimum of 20. Although this algorithm differs slightly from that used in the NORC study (Reiss, 1953), it results in identical prestige

TABLE 1. Sample Sizes and Return Rates for Participating Schools.

Schools	Agriculture School Enrollment (N)	Initial Sample (N)	Adjusted Sample (N)	Returns (N)	Raw Rate (%)	Adjusted Rate (%)
University of Arkansas	691	104	100	83	80	83
Auburn University	1,340	201	193	118	59	61
Clemson University	839	126	118	93	73	78
University of Florida	895	124	118	90	73	76
University of Georgia	1,398	205	193	122	60	63
University of Kentucky	1,295	190	173	133	70	77
Louisiana State University	1,294	193	178	137	71	77
Mississippi State University	1,161	174	164	122	70	74
North Carolina State University	2,538	381	370	284	75	77
Oklahoma State University	1,905	286	275	205	72	74
University of Tennessee	1,422	213	200	146	69	73
Texas A&M University	4,151	625	577	448	72	78
Texas Tech University	1,364	205	203	139	67	68
Virginia Polytechnical Institute	2,473	371	363	272	74	75
TOTAL	22,766	3,398	3,225	2,392	70	74

scores. A second index, Agreement Scores, was calculated for each occupation as the standard deviation of the prestige scores. Thus, the Agreement Scores Index is an estimate of the degree to which respondents converge in their perception of the standing of occupations.

The occupations to be ranked were chosen as follows: The first group was made up of a list of agriculture and agriculture-related occupations based upon (1) interviews with agriculture students as to the type of occupation they expected to enter, (2) interviews with agriculture professors as to the type of occupations their graduates have entered, and (3) a literature review that included the Dictionary of Occupation Titles. From this list of over 300 occupations, 50 agricultural occupations were purposefully selected. Selection reflected an interest to choose occupations with a reasonably high level of recognition and occupations that would span the prestige continuum. There was also an effort to include a range of commodity and livestock type occupations, e.g., cotton, peanut, soybean, and rice growers and cattle, swine, and poultry raisers. A second group of nine occupations were selected from the original NORC list (Reiss, 1961: 54-57), taking every ninth position from that scale. It was planned that these nine NORC occupations would provide a means of transforming the agricultural occupation scores into "standardized" NORC values. Finally, "housewife" was included to estimate the prestige attached to this quasi-occupational title.

Analysis of Data

The Agricultural Occupation Prestige Scale appears as Table 2. The table consists of sixty occupations that were ranked by agricultural students during the spring semester, 1977. Fifty of these are considered to be either agricultural or agriculturally-related occupations. The non-agricultural occupations are indicated by an asterisk. Accompanying the list of occupations are the prestige scores, the occupation's rank in the set, and where possible, the comparable score obtained in the 1947 NORC study. An examination of the table will indicate that the 60 occupations tended to span the range of the NORC scale. Veterinarian, with a prestige score of 92.7, was rated as the most prestigious occupation while migrant laborer, with a score of 34.0, was the occupation with lowest evaluation. It should be recalled that the scaling procedure restricts scores in the range from 20 (a consistent evaluation of "poor standing") to 100 (a consistent evaluation of "excellent standing"). There was also a noted tendency for occupations to cluster toward the middle of the scale. For example, 25 of the occupations were rated as having scores between 60 and 70.

There was a decided tendency for the sample to evaluate professional, managerial, and scientific occupations toward the top of the prestige hierarchy. Veterinarian, physician, Secretary of Agriculture, Dean of Agriculture, and nuclear physicist were given very high ratings. Professor in Agriculture, landscape architect, USDA researcher, wildlife refuge manager and farm manager also obtained high scores. It is interesting to note that in a sample of agricultural students the only occupation that clearly involved production agriculture in this top ten list was farm manager, and it ranked tenth. In addition, plant nursery owner (with a score of 75.3 and rank of 14) and cattle raiser (with a score of 75.1 and rank of 15) were the only other agricultural occupations which tended to fall in the middle range of the hierarchy. Soybean grower, poultry raiser, and rice grower all had scores that fell within a tight band from 62 to 69. The lone

TABLE 2. The Prestige of Agricultural Occupations: Sample of 2,392 Southern Agriculture Students.

Occupation	Prestige Scores	Rank	NORC Scores
Veterinarian	92.7	1	--
Physician*	91.5	2	93
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture	89.4	3	--
Dean of Agriculture	86.4	4	--
Nuclear Physicist*	85.1	5	86
Professor in Agriculture	82.1	6	--
Landscape Architect	79.8	7	--
USDA Researcher	78.8	8	--
Wildlife Refuge Manager	78.0	9	--
Farm Manager	77.2	10	--
Biologist	77.0	11	81
Government Scientist	76.8	12	88
Soil Conservationist	75.5	13	--
Plant Nursery Owner	75.3	14	--
Cattle Raiser	75.1	15	--
Ecologist	74.4	16	--
County Agriculture Agent	74.4	17	77
Agriculture Economist	74.3	18	--
Agriculture Loan Officer	72.7	19	--
Newspaper Agriculture Editor	70.9	20	--
Soybean Grower	69.2	21	--
Tree Farmer	69.0	22	--
Feed Store Owner	69.0	23	--
Horse Trainer	68.5	24	--
High School Vocational Ag. Teacher	68.4	25	--
Cotton Grower	68.4	26	--
Swine Raiser	66.5	27	--
Peanut Grower	65.9	28	--
Tree Surgeon	65.9	29	--
Poultry Raiser	65.7	30	--
Dietician	65.6	31	--

TABLE 2. The Prestige of Agricultural Occupations: Sample of 2,392 Southern Agriculture Students. (cont.)

Occupation	Prestige Scores	Rank	NORC Scores
Florist	65.0	32	--
Housewife*	64.9	33	--
Rural Sociologist	64.5	34	--
Fruit Inspector	64.1	35	--
Restaurant Manager	64.0	36	--
Farm Implement Salesman	63.8	37	--
Crop Duster	63.7	38	--
Home Economist	63.4	39	--
Slaughterhouse Manager	63.0	40	--
Peace Corps Member	62.9	41	--
County Home Demo Agent	62.2	42	--
Rice Grower	62.0	43	--
Railroad Engineer*	60.5	44	77
Jockey	60.0	45	--
Pest Exterminator	58.3	46	--
Undertaker*	56.6	47	72
Incubator Man	55.8	48	--
Railroad Conductor*	53.3	49	67
Rodeo Cowboy	53.0	50	--
Hay Baler	52.6	51	--
Farm Hand	52.4	52	50
Tenant Farmer	47.2	53	68
Groundskeeper	47.0	54	--
Machine Operator*	45.5	55	60
Sharecropper	43.1	56	40
Killfloor Worker	41.9	57	--
Filling Station Attendant*	38.8	58	52
Clothes Presser in Laundry*	34.3	59	46
Migratory Farm Worker	34.0	60	--

*Selected non-agriculture occupations used for reference points to General Occupational Structure

exception is what turned out to be the high-prestige mode of farming, cattle raising. In terms of livestock, swine raisers were given substantially lower scores than cattle raisers, and poultry raisers were ranked slightly lower than swine raisers, indicating an interesting "barnyard ranking" of these occupations. This finding, coupled with the informal observation of how cattle raising is romanticized in mass culture, certainly points to cattle raising as a special category of agricultural occupations. As children we might have played cowboys, but certainly not "chicken-boys or pig-boys", and interestingly, the hierarchy is also maintained among such deviant occupations as thieves (cattle rustlers are more prestigious than chicken thieves).

There were twelve occupations that clearly involved traditional agricultural production that we have tentatively arranged into three occupational groups: livestock farming, crop farming and work classification. These groups along with their prestige scores are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Groupings of Production Agricultural Occupations.

Animal Farming	Crop Farming	Work Classification
Cattle raiser (75.1)	Soybean grower (69.2)	Farm manager (77.2)
Swine raiser (66.5)	Cotton grower (68.4)	Farm hand (52.4)
Poultry raiser (65.7)	Peanut grower (65.9)	Tenant farmer (47.2)
	Rice grower (62.0)	Sharecropper (43.1)
		Migratory farm laborer (34.0)

When the production occupations are grouped in this manner, three patterns seem to emerge: (1) In terms of livestock farming, there is an already noted propensity for cattle raising to rank higher than other types and relatively little difference among other types of livestock production. (2) In terms of crop farming, there does not seem to be any clear differentiation with regard to type of crop; rice grower was given somewhat lower prestige than the other occupations which might have resulted from the students' knowing less about rice farming than the other three crops. (3) The sharpest differentiation clearly exists with regard to work classification. Farm managers were given quite high scores while farm hands, tenant farmers, sharecroppers, and what turned out to be the lowest prestige occupation of those considered, migratory farm laborers, were ranked low. It seems clear that farm production occupations were ranked high only if they involved either ownership or management by inference. Also in Table 2, NORC scores for 14 occupations are provided. These values allow us to compare how our students scored occupations relative to the national study. There was a discernable tendency for the students to give lower prestige scores than the national sample. The average agricultural student scores for the 14 occupations was 59.7, while the NORC panel yielded a comparable estimate of 68.4. This implies two things: It suggests that if we wish to transform our scores to some sort of national score, a modest upward adjustment would be in order. It also tends to support the notion developed by Alexander (1972) that individuals of relatively high prestige tend to give lower scores to occupations

below them in the prestige hierarchy than a more general sample would.

Although there was a clear tendency for the agriculture student to give lower scores, the correlation between the hierarchy produced by the agriculture students and that produced by the NORC sample was .904, indicating a strong agreement in the ordering of a set of 14 occupations in terms of prestige. A simple regression analysis results in an equation of the form

NORC Score = 18.8 + .83 (agricultural prestige score).

This expression may be used as an interim basis for calculating scale values similar in magnitude with those produced by NORC. A more detailed and elegant solution to this problem is currently being undertaken by Curry (1978).

In Table 4, the occupations in the scale are re-arranged and ranked according to the degree of agreement in the perception of prestige. The agreement index is, in actuality, the standard deviation of the prestige ratings. An examination of the index indicated that the occupation veterinarian is one that is held in consistently high prestige by most agriculture students. A high level of agreement was also observed for farm manager, feed store owner, professor in agriculture, and county agriculture agent. Of particular note is the other end of the agreement index ranking where there seems to be considerable amount of disagreement about the prestige of such occupations as Peace Corps member, undertaker, housewife, and jockey. The interpretation of higher disagreement scores can probably best be made on an occupation-by-occupation basis. For example, it might be that the considerable disagreement for the occupation of Peace Corps member is a reflection of the students' humanistic orientations. Thus, those who hold a strong humanistic orientation would tend to rank the occupation high, and those who did not, would rank it low.

The occupation of "housewife" may require a different explanation. Since it is a label that does not necessarily bring to mind a specific stereotyped set of tasks, it is possible that a housewife label may conjure up images that range from wealthy women who hire servants to poor ones who wash their clothes by hand.

Sources of Variation

At this point, we now move to an analysis of possible sources of variation in the perception of prestige of agricultural students. The general gist of this analysis will follow the common-sense notion that students from markedly diverse backgrounds and students who have markedly diverse access to certain occupations will tend to perceive a somewhat different prestige hierarchy.

In Table 5, the occupational prestige scores for both male and female students are reported. It is our interpretation that, in general, students of both sexes were perceiving essentially the same prestige hierarchy. A rapid scan of the two lists of scores will reveal that female students gave as high, or almost as high, a rating as male students to those occupations to which they have historically had little access. A correlation coefficient of .96 was found between the male and female scores, indicating the strength of the congruency. There were, however, some small yet systematic differences in the perception of prestige by sex. If we were

TABLE 4. Agreement of Ratings for Prestige of Agricultural Occupations.

Occupation	Agreement (S.D.)	Rank	Prestige Scores	Rank
Veterinarian	13.6	1	92.7	1
Farm Manager	15.7	2	77.2	10
Feed Store Owner	15.8	3	69.0	23
Professor in Agriculture	15.9	4	82.1	6
Soil Conservationist	16.0	5	75.5	13
County Agriculture Agent	16.2	6	74.4	17
Physician*	16.2	7	91.5	2
Farm Implement Salesman	16.3	8	63.8	37
Clothes Press in Laundry*	16.6	9	34.3	59
USDA Researcher	16.9	10	78.8	8
Filling Station Attendant*	17.0	11	38.8	58
Tree Farmer	17.1	12	69.0	22
Plant Nursery Owner	17.1	13	75.3	14
Fruit Inspector	17.1	14	64.1	35
Landscape Architect	17.3	15	79.8	7
Restaurant Manager	17.3	16	64.0	36
Newspaper Agriculture Editor	17.4	17	70.9	20
Agriculture Economist	17.5	18	74.3	18
Soybean Grower	17.5	19	69.2	21
Migratory Farm Worker	17.6	20	34.0	60
Poultry Raiser	17.7	21	65.7	30
Home Economist	17.7	22	63.4	39
Cattle Raiser	17.7	23	75.1	15
Pest Exterminator	17.7	24	58.3	46
High School Vocational Ag. Teacher	17.8	25	68.4	25
Incubator Man	17.8	26	55.8	48
Wildlife Refuge Man	17.9	27	78.0	9
County Home Demo Agent	18.3	28	62.2	42
Florist	18.3	29	65.0	32
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture	18.4	30	89.4	3
Peanut Grower	18.4	31	65.9	28

TABLE 4. Agreement of Ratings for Prestige of Agricultural Occupations. (cont)

Occupation	Agreement (S.D.)	Rank	Prestige Scores	Rank
Groundskeeper	18.5	32	47.0	54
Swine Raiser	18.5	33	66.5	27
Slaughterhouse Manager	18.5	34	63.0	40
Crop Duster	18.5	35	63.7	38
Cotton Grower	18.5	36	68.4	26
Horse Trainer	18.5	37	68.5	24
Dean of Agriculture	18.6	38	86.4	4
Agriculture Loan Officer	18.6	39	72.7	19
Railroad Conductor*	18.7	40	53.3	49
Machine Operator*	18.8	41	45.5	55
Biologist	18.8	42	77.0	11
Hay Baler	18.9	43	52.6	51
Tree Surgeon	19.2	44	65.9	29
Dietician	19.3	45	65.6	31
Killfloor Worker	19.6	46	41.9	57
Railroad Engineer*	19.6	47	60.5	44
Rural Sociologist	19.8	48	64.5	34
Tenant Farmer	19.8	49	47.2	53
Farm Hand	20.2	50	52.4	52
Ecologist	20.3	51	74.4	16
Government Scientist	20.4	52	76.8	12
Sharecropper	20.6	53	43.1	56
Rodeo Cowboy	20.7	54	53.0	50
Rice Grower	21.0	55	62.0	43
Nuclear Physicist*	21.0	56	85.1	5
Jockey	21.6	57	60.0	45
Housewife*	22.3	58	64.9	33
Undertaker*	22.9	59	56.6	47
Peace Corps Member	23.2	60	62.9	41

*Selected non-agriculture occupations used for reference points to General Occupational Structure

TABLE 5. Sex and the Differences in Prestige of Agricultural Occupations.

Occupation	Sex	
	Male (1715)	Female (675)
Veterinarian	91.8	95.2
Physician	90.5	94.1
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture	88.8	91.0
Dean of Agriculture	86.3	86.5
Nuclear Physicist	83.1	90.2
Professor in Agriculture	81.9	82.6
Landscape Architect	78.1	83.8
USDA Researcher	77.1	80.7
Wildlife Refuge Manager	76.9	80.7
Farm Manager	77.4	76.7
Biologist	75.1	81.8
Government Scientist	75.1	81.0
Soil Conservationist	74.7	77.6
Plant Nursery Owner	74.4	77.4
Cattle Raiser	75.1	75.0
Ecologist	72.0	80.6
County Agriculture Agent	74.0	75.4
Agriculture Economist	73.8	75.5
Agriculture Loan Officer	73.2	71.5
Newspaper Agriculture Editor	70.1	72.9
Soybean Grower	70.0	66.9
Tree Farmer	68.7	69.9
Feed Store Owner	70.0	66.6
Horse Trainer	66.0	74.6
High School Vocational Ag. Teacher	68.7	67.7
Cotton Grower	69.5	65.5
Swine Raiser	67.0	65.0
Peanut Grower	66.7	64.1
Tree Surgeon	64.7	68.9
Poultry Raiser	65.5	66.2

TABLE 5. Sex and the Differences in Prestige of Agricultural Occupations. (cont)

Occupation	Sex	
	Male (1715)	Female (675)
Dietician	63.4	71.1
Florist	63.6	68.5
Housewife	65.8	62.7
Rural Sociologist	62.7	69.1
Fruit Inspector	63.6	65.4
Restaurant Manager	64.0	64.0
Farm Implement Salesman	64.5	62.2
Crop Duster	65.4	59.1
Home Economist	62.9	64.7
Slaughterhouse Manager	64.5	59.0
Peace Corps Member	60.4	69.0
County Home Demo Agent	61.8	63.2
Rice Grower	63.0	59.4
Railroad Engineer	59.8	62.4
Jockey	57.9	65.0
Pest Exterminator	58.6	57.7
Undertaker	56.6	56.4
Incubator Man	55.4	56.7
Railroad Conductor	52.6	55.0
Rodeo Cowboy	53.2	52.5
Hay Baler	53.8	49.3
Farm Hand	51.8	53.8
Tenant Farmer	48.6	43.7
Groundskeeper	46.4	48.3
Machine Operator	46.1	43.9
Sharecropper	43.8	41.3
Killfloor Worker	42.9	39.0
Filling Station Attendant	39.1	38.1
Clothes Presser in Laundry	35.0	32.5
Migratory Farm Worker	33.9	34.0

to use a span of four prestige increments to indicate a real difference in prestige scores (the four-point interval seems fairly consistent on a statistical basis, since the 95 percent confidence interval for scale values was generally less than ± 1), we would find the following patterns: Female prestige scores were higher for a set of occupations that we feel were either scientific, aesthetic or humanistic in nature. For example, in 13 of the comparisons, higher prestige scores were obtained for the women's sample to include the occupations of landscape architect, USDA researchers, biologist, government scientist, ecologist, horse trainer, tree surgeon, dietician, florist, rural sociologist, Peace Corps member, jockey and nuclear physicist. Male students, on the other hand, tended to rank such occupations as cotton grower, crop duster, slaughterhouse manager, hay baler, and tenant farmer as having higher prestige. This seems to imply that women gave higher prestige to scientific, aesthetic, and humanistic occupations because they constitute occupations that are more accessible for females than, say, production agriculture jobs. This inclination should be tempered by the finding that such traditionally female endeavors as home economist, clothes presser in a laundry, and housewife were scored about the same by both males and females.

In Tables 6, 7, and 8 [redacted], the influence of farm background upon the perception of prestige of agriculture occupations is investigated using three different indicators. In Table 6, we investigated the differences in prestige relative to the size of the place the student lived most of his or her life; in Table 7, we presented a comparison between students who have lived on a farm; in Table 8, we reported the scores of those students whose families own, rent, or lease farms and those whose families do not. A detailed analysis of all these tables is beyond the space allotted for this paper. However, we do feel that some generalizations about the data can be brought forth. It appears to us at this point in our analysis that farm background experience, or conversely, urban experiences do not result in any fundamentally different prestige hierarchy; that is to say that throughout these rather lengthy tables those differences which do occur tended to be slight in magnitude and there were certainly no radically different prestige hierarchies for any subgroup. There was a slight tendency for students with farm backgrounds to give higher scores to those occupations which came into closer contact with the ongoing operations of a farm--for example, feed store owner, crop duster, farm implement salesman, and hay baler. Also for reasons that are less than clear, students with farm backgrounds tended to rank lower such occupations as biologist, government scientist, ecologist, and Peace Corps member.

Conclusions

It appears that the increased complexity, specificity, and diversity that are characteristic of the general American occupational structure are also reflected in the agricultural sector. Our investigation of 50 agricultural or agriculturally-related occupations resulted in a wide array of prestige rankings of these occupations along nearly the entire prestige spectrum. One obvious conclusion is that the occupational structure of agriculture is hardly viewed as a monolithic prestige category, but rather is composed of many occupations perceived as having varied degrees of social standing. It is also suggestive from our analysis that at least certain dimensions underlying prestige ratings are shared by both the general occupational structure and agricultural occupations. As in the case with

general occupational ratings, we found that professional, technical, and managerial occupations tended to receive the highest prestige scores, and occupations involving unskilled, semi-skilled, and manual labor tended to receive the lowest ratings. In this sense, our prestige scale bracketed the range from veterinarian to migratory farm laborers.

Interestingly, even among our sample of undergraduate agricultural majors, most professional and technical positions ranked above the central and most significant occupation of farming, for this subset of occupations. It can be hypothesized that the somewhat lower rating given farmers may be associated with the perception of a manual labor component intrinsic to farming. The only traditionally agricultural production occupation that received a higher prestige rating was the highly romanticized occupation of "cattle raiser". Agricultural occupations that involved a high degree of manual labor, such as migrant laborers and farm hands, were given very low ratings. Production agriculture occupations were grouped along three dimensions--crops, livestock, and work classification. Generally, we found little variation in occupational prestige among crop farming, i.e., soybean, cotton, peanut, and rice growers were not given markedly different prestige ratings. Along the livestock dimension, swine and poultry raisers were rated similarly, while that glamour farming occupation, cattle raiser, as previously mentioned, received substantially higher ratings. In terms of work classification, only farm managers had relatively high prestige scores. In fact, those occupations which approximated the "hired hand" type were among the very lowest occupations in prestige. It should be noted that throughout the analysis the category of migrant farm laborer was in every instance given the lowest scores.

Also indicated was the fact that while some occupations were rated quite differently in our study as compared to such national reference points as the 1947 NORC study, both groups were perceiving a very similar overall occupational hierarchy. Fourteen occupations appeared in both studies. It was remarkable that a correlation of .90 was obtained between scores for the 1947 NORC study and our 1977 study of agricultural occupations given the differences in populations and the thirty-year time lapse since the 1947 study. Although it remains unclear the degree to which our scores may be generalized and merged with the NORC scores for the general U.S. population, our initial analysis does point to the possible utility of producing a slightly upward adjusted version to be used in conjunction with the NORC scale.

Tentatively, it seems that the occupational hierarchy as revealed by our rating scale is generally pervasive throughout groups and subclassifications among agriculture students. Thus, a rather lengthy analysis of prestige scores by sex and indicators of farm background failed to result in any drastically different prestige hierarchies. Both male and female students, both urbanites and students from farms, both students from families who owned farms and those from families who did not were apparently viewing a similar prestige hierarchy of agricultural occupations. The most notable exception to this generalization was for women agriculture students to give slightly higher prestige evaluations to scientific, humanistic and aesthetic occupations.

A closing caveat is in order. We wish to stress that the analysis presented in this report is preliminary, and consequently all conclusions are of necessity tentative. We are currently projecting continued work

on this scale over the next several months, with special attention being given to an expansion of the investigation into possible sources of variation in the perception of prestige and a parallel investigation into possible methods of producing generalizable prestige scores. A more definitive evaluation of the Agricultural Prestige Scale and of our conclusions about the nature of the prestige structure of agricultural occupations will await this additional analysis.

Credits

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Table 6. Size of Place and Prestige of Agricultural Occupations

Occupation	Size of Place					
	On a Farm (516)	In the Country (202)	Town or Village (under 10,000) (332)	Small City (10,000 to 50,000) (482)	Medium-sized city (50,000 to 500,000) (552)	Metropolitan (over 500,000) (284)
Veterinarian	92.4	92.6	93.0	93.0	92.1	93.6
Physician	89.4	89.8	92.8	92.5	91.8	92.8
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture	88.1	89.3	90.2	89.8	89.5	91.1
Dean of Agriculture	86.3	85.2	87.2	86.8	86.2	86.5
Nuclear Physicist	81.7	85.1	84.7	85.7	86.8	87.5
Professor in Agriculture	82.1	83.6	83.2	81.4	81.9	82.0
Landscape Architect	76.1	79.7	79.0	81.7	80.5	82.8
USDA Researcher	77.1	80.2	78.1	79.6	79.5	79.4
Wildlife Refuge Manager	74.5	78.7	77.5	80.0	79.5	77.8
Farm Manager	81.0	76.2	77.6	76.0	75.3	76.7
Biologist	72.2	77.8	75.9	79.3	79.0	78.6
Government Scientist	72.5	77.8	77.3	78.1	79.1	77.0
Soil Conservationist	75.5	76.4	75.6	75.5	75.5	75.3
Plant Nursery Owner	73.3	74.8	74.3	76.3	76.4	76.3
Cattle Raiser	78.3	72.1	74.5	74.9	74.5	73.5
Ecologist	67.1	74.5	74.8	76.7	77.3	77.3
County Agriculture Agent	74.5	76.5	74.9	73.3	73.8	76.0
Agriculture Economist	74.4	75.5	74.7	73.8	73.8	75.1

Table 6. Size of Place and Prestige of Agricultural Occupations (cont.)

Occupation	Size of Place					
	On a Farm (516)	In the Country (202)	Town or Village (under 10,000) (332)	Small City (10,000 to 50,000) (482)	Medium-sized city (50,000 to 500,000) (552)	Metropolitan (over 500,000) (284)
Machine Operator	47.1	45.4	45.1	45.2	45.1	45.1
Sharecropper	47.2	41.3	44.3	41.1	40.7	44.0
Killfloor Worker	46.1	41.3	41.5	40.0	40.2	41.0
Filling Station Attendant	40.2	39.1	40.4	37.2	38.5	38.2
Clothes Presser in Laundry	34.8	33.2	36.0	34.5	33.8	33.4
Migratory Farm Worker	34.2	33.6	34.9	33.6	34.0	33.6

Table 6. Size of Place and Prestige of Agricultural Occupations (cont.)

Occupation	Size of Place					
	On a Farm (516)	In the Country (202)	Town or Village (under 10,000) (332)	Small City (10,000 to 50,000) (482)	Medium-sized city (50,000 to 500,000) (552)	Metropolitan (over 500,000) (284)
Agriculture Loan Officer	76.3	71.6	74.1	71.8	70.1	72.7
Newspaper Agriculture Editor	71.2	68.4	71.1	70.8	70.4	73.4
Soybean Grower	73.1	68.0	70.3	67.8	67.1	68.2
Tree Farmer	67.8	68.3	69.4	70.5	69.0	69.2
Feed Store Owner	72.1	69.9	70.3	67.8	67.1	67.2
Horse Trainer	67.8	66.1	67.7	69.3	69.1	69.9
High School Voc. Ag. Teacher	71.4	70.3	69.9	66.9	65.9	68.2
Cotton Grower	72.2	66.9	68.9	67.8	66.1	67.7
Swine Raiser	71.9	64.8	66.9	64.3	64.0	65.6
Peanut Grower	69.0	65.2	67.6	64.6	64.1	64.9
Tree Surgeon	64.8	66.4	64.7	66.7	66.6	66.4
Poultry Raiser	67.9	63.2	64.9	65.4	64.5	66.9
Dietician	64.2	64.6	66.2	66.6	65.4	67.5
Florist	63.5	63.3	64.5	67.2	64.4	67.1
Housewife	67.7	60.1	63.4	65.9	64.2	65.1
Rural Sociologist	61.4	61.8	64.2	65.5	66.6	67.3
Fruit Inspector	64.0	63.5	64.4	63.9	64.2	64.7
Restaurant Manager	64.5	62.5	65.8	64.7	62.6	64.1

Table 6. Size of Place and Prestige of Agricultural Occupations (cont.)

Occupation	Size of Place					
	On a Farm (516)	In the Country (202)	Town or Village (under 10,000) (332)	Small City (10,000 to 50,000) (482)	Medium-sized city (50,000 to 500,000) (552)	Metropolitan (over 500,000) (284)
Farm Implement Salesman	68.5	61.9	64.1	63.0	62.0	61.7
Crop Duster	68.0	62.7	65.6	62.5	61.0	61.7
Home Economist	64.4	62.0	65.3	64.1	62.0	62.5
Slaughterhouse Manager	68.0	61.0	64.2	62.1	59.5	62.8
Peace Corps Member	56.8	61.0	62.1	65.6	67.3	62.5
County Home Demo Agent	64.4	62.9	61.2	61.8	61.2	59.7
Rice Grower	65.0	57.9	62.7	60.9	59.9	64.5
Railroad Engineer	59.6	61.7	61.1	61.6	60.6	59.1
Jockey	58.6	57.7	57.4	61.2	61.5	62.7
Pest Exterminator	59.7	59.7	58.5	58.0	57.2	57.6
Undertaker	56.2	58.9	58.5	56.3	55.1	57.4
Incubator Man	55.7	56.9	55.8	56.3	54.5	56.1
Railroad Conductor	53.7	52.4	53.4	54.5	52.5	51.8
Rodeo Cowboy	54.5	53.3	52.2	52.9	52.9	51.6
Hay Baler	59.0	51.0	54.3	50.6	48.9	49.6
Farm Hand	53.6	50.9	51.8	52.3	51.5	53.6
Tenant Farmer	50.8	45.9	48.1	46.2	44.9	46.4
Groundskeeper	45.3	46.7	48.5	47.0	47.4	47.7

Table 7. Farm Background and the Prestige of Agricultural Occupations

Occupation	Farm Background	
	Never lived on a farm or ranch (1493)	Lived one or more years on a farm or ranch (899)
Veterinarian	92.5	93.1
Physician	92.4	89.9
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture	90.3	87.9
Dean of Agriculture	86.4	86.3
Nuclear Physicist	86.5	82.7
Professor in Agriculture	81.9	82.4
Landscape Architect	81.3	77.3
USDA Researcher	79.4	77.9
Wildlife Refuge Manager	79.0	76.1
Farm Manager	75.5	80.0
Biologist	79.1	73.5
Government Scientist	78.6	73.8
Soil Conservationist	75.5	75.5
Plant Nursery Owner	75.8	74.4
Cattle Raiser	73.6	73.4
Ecologist	77.2	69.8
County Agriculture Agent	74.1	74.8
Agriculture Economist	74.0	74.7
Agriculture Loan Officer	71.3	75.0
Newspaper Agriculture Editor	70.5	71.5
Soybean Grower	67.5	71.8
Tree Farmer	69.5	68.3
Feed Store Owner	67.1	72.0
Horse Trainer	68.3	68.6
High School Vocational Ag. Teacher	67.0	70.8
Cotton Grower	66.4	71.6
Swine Raiser	64.3	70.0
Peanut Grower	64.8	67.8
Tree Surgeon	66.3	65.2

Table 7. Farm Background and the Prestige of Agricultural Occupations (cont.)

Occupation	Farm Background	
	Never lived on a farm or ranch (1493)	Lived one or more years on a farm or ranch (899)
Poultry Raiser	65.0	66.8
Dietician	66.1	64.8
Florist	65.5	64.0
Housewife	64.3	65.8
Rural Sociologist	65.9	62.3
Fruit Inspector	64.0	65.4
Restaurant Manager	64.0	63.9
Farm Implement Salesman	62.0	66.9
Crop Duster	61.7	67.0
Home Economist	62.8	64.4
Slaughterhouse Manager	60.9	66.5
Peace Corps Member	65.4	58.7
County Home Demo Agent	61.2	63.8
Rice Grower	60.9	63.6
Railroad Engineer	60.8	60.1
Jockey	60.5	59.0
Pest Exterminator	57.8	59.2
Undertaker	56.5	56.7
Incubator Man	55.4	56.2
Railroad Conductor	52.9	53.8
Rodeo Cowboy	52.5	54.3
Hay Baler	49.8	56.9
Farm Hand	51.2	54.2
Tenant Farmer	45.4	50.2
Groundskeeper	47.3	46.4
Machine Operator	45.1	46.3
Sharecropper	41.0	46.6
Killfloor Worker	39.9	45.1

Table 7. Farm Background and the Prestige of Agricultural Occupations (cont.)

Occupation	Farm Background	
	Never lived on a farm or ranch (1493)	Lived one or more years on a farm or ranch (899)
Filling Station Attendant	38.4	39.6
Clothes Presser in Laundry	34.0	34.7
Migratory Farm Worker	33.6	34.6

Table 8. Family Farming Status and the Prestige of Agricultural Occupations

Occupation	Family Farming Status	
	Family Owns, Rents, or Leases a Farm or Ranch (1000)	Family Does Not Own, Rent, or Lease a Farm or Ranch (1392)
Veterinarian	92.6	92.8
Physician	90.3	92.3
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture	88.6	90.0
Dean of Agriculture	86.0	86.6
Nuclear Physicist	83.0	86.6
Professor in Agriculture	82.0	82.1
Landscape Architect	77.5	81.4
USDA Researcher	77.5	79.8
Wildlife Refuge Manager	75.3	79.8
Farm Manager	79.4	75.6
Biologist	73.6	79.4
Government Scientist	73.4	79.1
Soil Conservationist	74.9	76.0
Plant Nursery Owner	74.2	76.0
Cattle Raiser	76.9	73.7
Ecologist	69.0	78.2
County Agriculture Agent	74.3	74.5
Agriculture Economist	74.2	74.3
Agriculture Loan Officer	75.1	70.9
Newspaper Agriculture Editor	71.2	70.6
Soybean Grower	71.7	67.3
Tree Farmer	67.7	70.0
Feed Store Owner	71.7	67.0
Horse Trainer	68.3	68.6
High School Vocational Ag. Teacher	69.8	67.4
Cotton Grower	71.3	66.3
Swine Raiser	69.6	64.2
Peanut Grower	67.7	64.6

Table 8. Family Farming Status and the Prestige of Agricultural Occupations (cont.)

Occupation	Family Farming Status	
	Family Owns, Rents, or Leases a Farm or Ranch (1000)	Family Does Not Own, Rent, or Lease a Farm or Ranch (1392)
Tree Surgeon	64.4	67.0
Poultry Raiser	66.5	65.1
Dietician	64.1	66.7
Florist	63.8	65.8
Housewife	66.1	64.0
Rural Sociologist	62.3	66.1
Fruit Inspector	64.0	64.3
Restaurant Manager	64.3	63.7
Farm Implement Salesman	66.5	61.9
Crop Duster	66.3	61.8
Home Economist	63.7	63.7
Slaughterhouse Manager	66.5	60.5
Peace Corps Member	58.5	65.9
County Home Demo Agent	63.5	61.2
Rice Grower	64.1	60.4
Railroad Engineer	60.7	60.4
Jockey	59.2	60.5
Pest Exterminator	59.2	57.7
Undertaker	56.7	56.5
Incubator Man	56.1	55.5
Railroad Conductor	53.4	53.1
Rodeo Cowboy	54.1	52.3
Hay Baler	56.5	49.6
Farm Hand	54.0	51.1
Tenant Farmer	50.0	45.2
Groundskeeper	45.8	47.8
Machine Operator	46.3	45.0

Table 8. Family Farming Status and the Prestige of Agricultural Occupations (cont.)

Occupation	Family Farming Status	
	Family Owns, Rents, or Leases a Farm or Ranch (1000)	Family Does Not Own, Rent, or Lease a Farm or Ranch (1392)
Sharecropper	45.8	41.2
Killfloor Worker	45.6	39.1
Filling Station Attendant	40.2	37.9
Clothes Presser in Laundry	35.2	33.7
Migratory Farm Worker	34.7	33.4

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